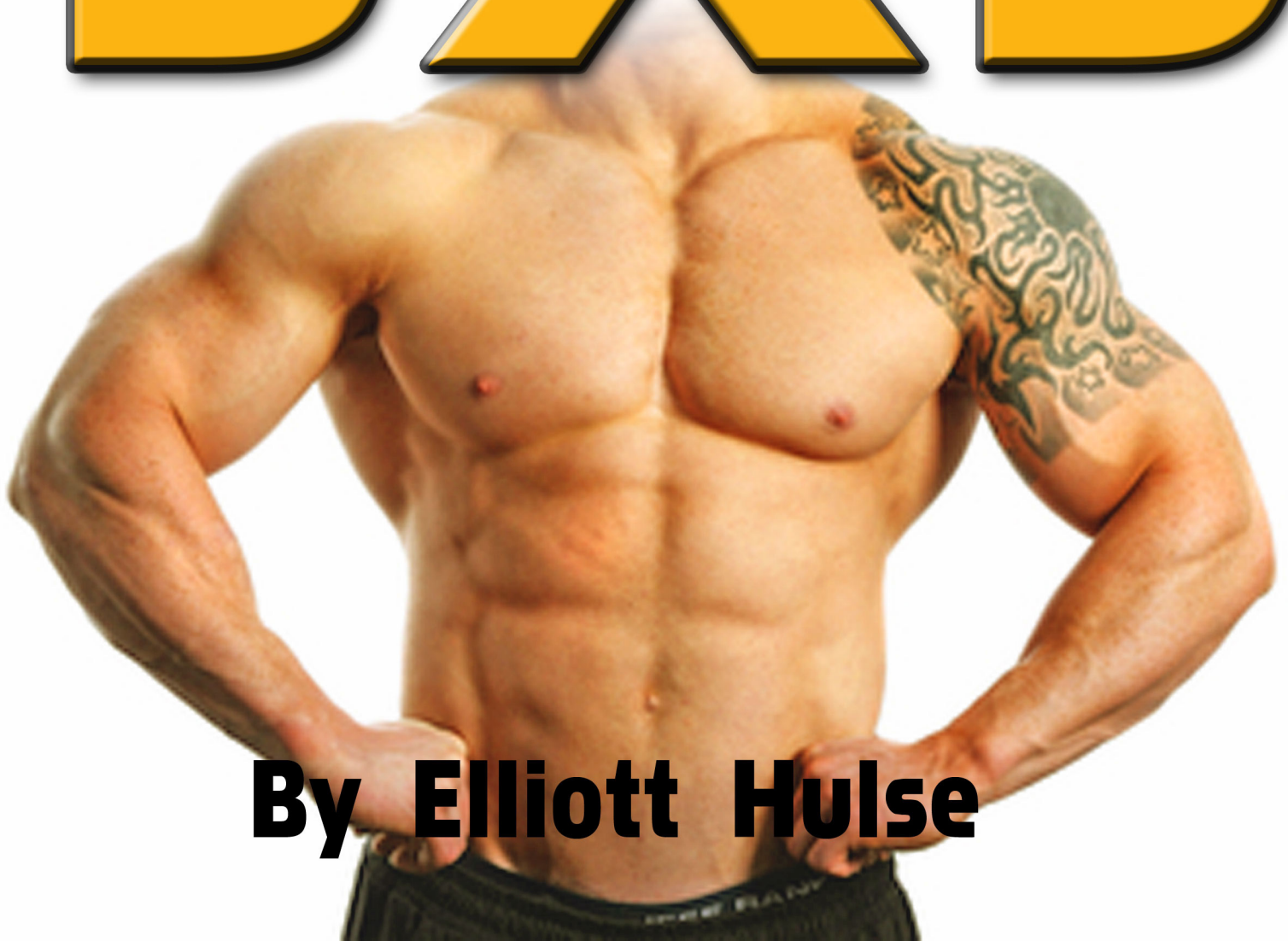


**THE GROW
STRONGER METHOD
PRESENTS**

ADVANCED 5X5



By Elliott Hulse

THE **GROW STRONGER METHOD**



ADVANCED 5X5

LEGAL STUFF

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The information presented is not intended for the treatment or prevention of disease, nor is it a substitute for medical treatment, nor as an alternative to medical advice.

This publication is presented for information purposes, to increase the public knowledge of developments in the field of strength and conditioning. The program outlined herein should not be adopted without a consultation with your health professional.

Use of the information provided is at the sole choice and risk of the reader. You must get your physician's approval before beginning this or any other exercise or nutrition program. This information is not a prescription. Consult your doctor, nutritionist or dietician for further information.

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ADVANCED 5X5

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INTRODUCTION

Back in the winter of 1993 I had just completed my first year of high school football, I was an undersized freshman noseguard with lots of athletic potential but a lot of work still to do.

The football season was great and as it came to an end I was preparing for my sophomore year. Unlike the other freshman football players with sights set on becoming starters for the junior varsity football team as sophomores, I was set on joining the varsity football team alongside the juniors and seniors.

I knew it was a long shot for a sophomore to be asked to join the varsity football team, but I was willing to do whatever it took to move up the ranks. I knew I had what it took to play football with the big boys, all I needed to do was gain some extra size and strength.

In my mind it was already done, I saw myself as an equal to the athletes that were two or three years older than me, many of them outweighing me by 100 pounds or more.

That winter my uncle began training bodybuilders and fitness athletes at old rundown gym in Jersey City. While training people for money he was also preparing himself for his first bodybuilding show.

On the weekends my superstrong, bodybuilding uncle would visit his sister, my mom, at our house on Long Island. He would drive almost 2 hours in order to train me and my younger brother in my parent's basement. At first all we had were a few sand filled dumbbells and those old school spring-loaded chest expanders.

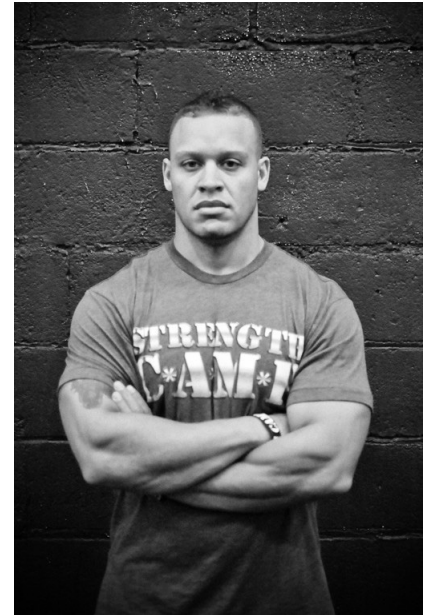
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For the first few months my uncle trained us using very little equipment following a mostly bodyweight training routine. Quickly he realized that his young nephews needed to lift some serious weight to take advantage of their adolescent growth spurts and set them on a path towards athletic success.

Although we didn't really have the money to spare, my father saved up a few hundred dollars and invested in a barbell, power rack, and around 400 pounds of Olympic training plates. With our home gym set my uncle began to teach me and my brother how to lift for increased size and strength. He also designed a very detailed meal plan for us to follow that allowed me to gain almost 30 pounds in less than six months.



We got bigger, stronger and more explosive following my uncle's training routine.

The program we followed consisted of squats, deadlifts, bench presses, overhead presses, bent over rows, chin-ups and power cleans. Every workout consisted of five sets of five repetitions of each exercise. My brother and I would follow this full body 5 x 5 workout on Tuesdays and Thursdays, on Saturdays my uncle would come over and train with us. He would then make any adjustments to the program or our meal plans that he saw fit.

By the time spring football training was over the varsity football coaches decided I was going to make a perfect fit as a undersized defensive lineman for the varsity football team. Although I was not a starter on the varsity football team, I reached my goal and I have my uncle to thank for that.

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I went on to become the captain of the varsity football team in both my junior and senior years. I also earned an athletic scholarship to play football at St. John's University, again as an undersized lineman, but I was strong enough and fast enough to be team MVP and All Conference, even in my freshman year. Later I went on to play running back and led the team in both rushing yards, touchdowns and quarterback sacks.

After college I studied exercise physiology in graduate school and ultimately went on to starting my own business as a strength and conditioning coach, teaching other young athletes, mainly football players, how to get bigger, faster and stronger.

To this day, almost 20 years later, I still refer back to that old 5 x 5 strength training routine that my uncle gave me and my brother back in high school when designing strength training programs for the young athletes that come to my gym, or for myself in order to reestablish my base foundation of strength.

In all of my years as an athlete and strength coach I have never found a better routine to follow for overall strength and muscle building than 5 x 5. But I've also found is that this routine can only be followed to a certain point. Once the nervous system becomes overtaxed, the joints begin to hurt and strength gains start to slow down.

It was this experience that led me to create my [Grow Stronger Method](#). The Grow Stronger Method was designed to offer many of the same benefits of 5 x 5 but with reduced volume and a focus on functional body strength, through gymnastics exercises, to supplement the barbell work.

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This method works extremely well for me and other well seasoned strength trainers and athletes. But I've also found that the high intensity can be too difficult for many intermediate strength trainees and athletes. It is for this reason I decided to create a method that bridges the gap between the 5 x 5 program for beginners and the high intensity required in my Grow Stronger Method.

I'm pleased to introduce this book, Advanced 5 x 5, as a means for maximizing the basic 5 x 5 training system and leading you through an intermediate phase where you can grow in size and strength while averting any plateaus. This culminates in an advanced strength and muscle building program similar in many ways to the Grow Stronger Method. You will also find a routine that is modifiable for athletes of different sports as well as a routine designed specifically for increasing muscular size.

Growing stronger is a life long journey, and in your hands you have one of many different roads in this journey. It just happens to be the road that I have followed and I'm still following to this day. I am pleased to share this with you and hope that the information herein will serve as inspiration and insight as you move towards the strongest version of yourself.

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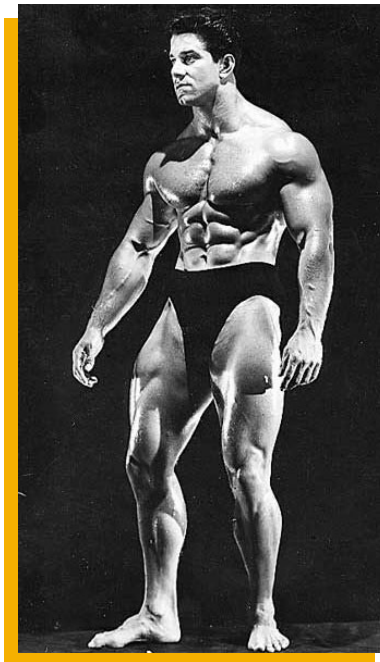
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THE HISTORY OF 5X5

No one is really sure who “invented” the 5x5 program. Although it is possible that the weightlifters and strongmen of the early 20th century used it, because these guys experimented with just about everything.

In 1960 Reg Park, champion bodybuilder, writer, and mentor to a young Arnold Schwarzenegger, published *Strength and Bulk Training for Weightlifters and Bodybuilders*. In this book, he laid out a method for building strength and size with five sets of five reps using heavy weights and compound exercises. His version of the



program was simple: after a few warm up sets, pick a weight you can do five reps with. Once you can lift the weight for 5x5, you are ready to move up.

Clearly, he was onto something; Not only did Reg have a world-class physique (he played Hercules in movies), he was one of the first people ever to bench-press over 500 lbs.

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The 5x5 program has been a mainstay for anyone looking for size and strength ever since.

Coach Bill Starr was the first person to popularize the 5x5 method in the athletic and strength-training world. In his book *The Strongest Shall Survive: Strength Training for Football*, Starr prescribed five sets of five reps with big, compound lifts to help football players get huge and powerful. Starr realized that the 5x5 approach was a great for both size and strength, particularly for athletes new to weight training.

Because the sets were kept to 5 reps, the weight could be heavy enough to train the nervous system to be more efficient and powerful, and the total volume (sets and reps) was high enough to create a hypertrophy response and help athletes to pack on a lot of muscle in a short amount of time.

Coach Starr coached the Baltimore Colts in 1970, the year they won the Super Bowl. He also held several national records in powerlifting and Olympic lifting. This guy knew his stuff.

Three decades later, 5x5 is still extremely popular, thanks to the program by Glenn Pendlay. Pendlay is a great strength athlete himself, having Squatted 800lbs, Deadlifted 700lbs, Bench Pressed 500lbs. He has coached over 90 national weightlifting champions.

His 5x5 program is similar to Starr's and is written for beginners and intermediate lifters who want to build a rock-solid foundation of strength and size.

5x5 is a great program for new lifters and athletes looking to increase both size and strength. This style of training is very powerful, and as we will talk about later, highly adaptable.

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WHY 5X5?

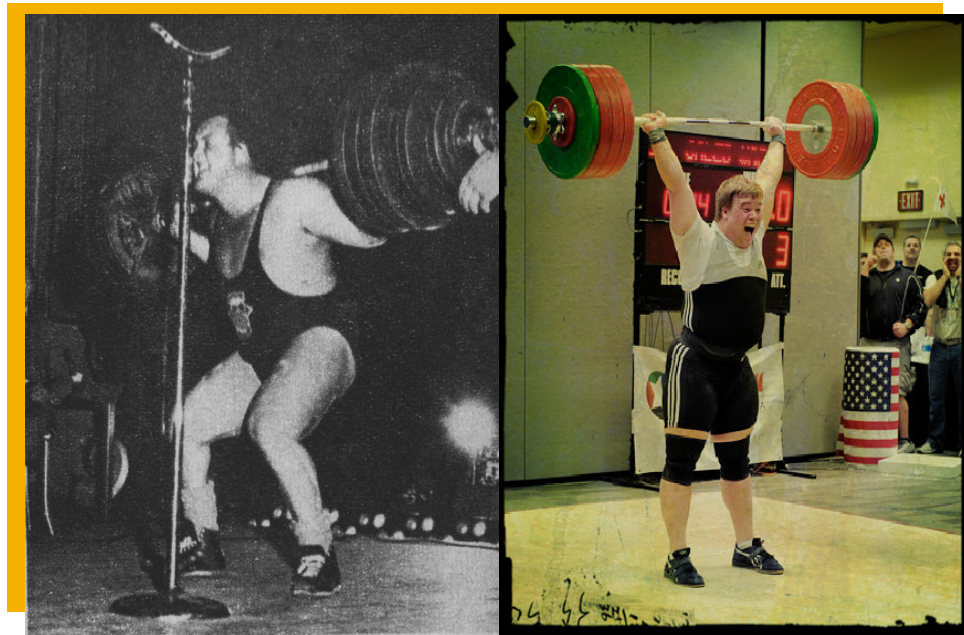
One of the reasons why 5x5 is such a useful training program is that it can be used for a wide variety of strength goals and experience levels. Bodybuilders, powerlifters, football players, new trainees, and athletes in just about every sport have used 5x5 to gain strength, mass, and athleticism.

By tweaking the program to serve various goals and implementing it intelligently, anyone can use 5x5 to access new levels of strength and build dense, functional muscle.

5X5 FOR STRENGTH:

5x5 is a great protocol for building a rock-solid foundation of neuromuscular strength. The loads used are heavy enough to stimulate the central nervous system, while the volume is high enough to cause a hypertrophy response.

If used correctly and intelligently, 5x5 can help you get the best of both worlds,



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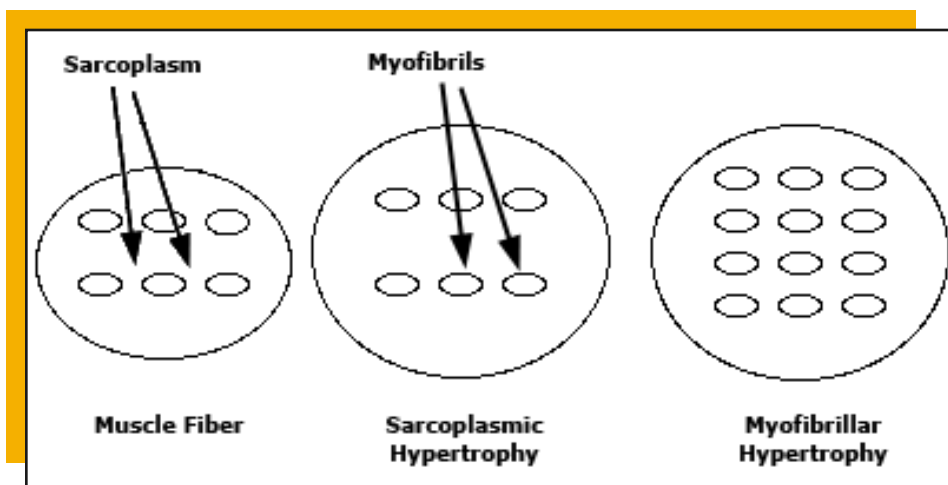
especially if you are relatively new to strength training or have been on a pure hypertrophy program for a while. 5X5 will help you gain strength while maintaining your hard-earned mass.

It is also highly effective for strength athletes and enthusiasts looking to add some quality mass, while maintaining or increasing their numbers.

Incredibly powerful strength athletes like Doug Hepburn, the first man to bench press 500 lbs and Olympic weightlifting prodigy Caleb Ward have famously used 5x5 in their programs to achieve exceptional strength.

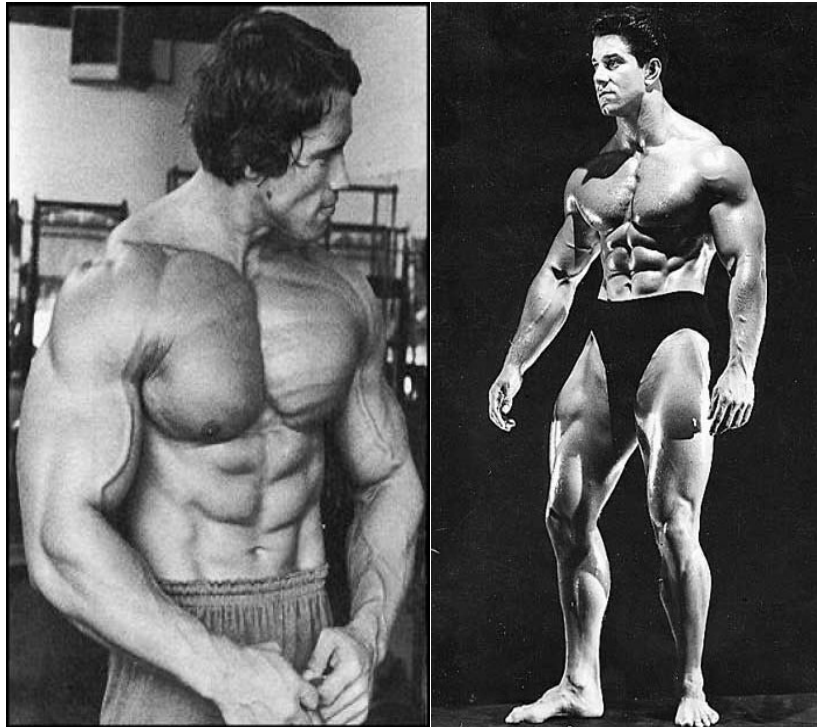
5X5 FOR MUSCLE:

5x5 is a solid program if hypertrophy is your goal. It is not uncommon for users to add 20-40 lbs of muscle in their first year of using 5x5. What makes it so effective is that this rep range stimulates two kinds of hypertrophy: myofibrillar and sarcoplasmic. Myofibrillar hypertrophy is an increase in the size and density of the actual muscle fibers, and is associated with the hard, dense muscle seen on Olympic lifters, lean powerlifters, and gymnasts.



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This type of muscle growth is associated with strength training, high intensity, and low volume.

Sarcoplasmic hypertrophy is an increase in the size of a muscle due to an increase in the fluid surrounding the muscle cells. This type of hypertrophy is responsible for that “swole” look bodybuilders are able to achieve through high volume, lower intensity training.

5x5 hits a sweet spot where both types of hypertrophy happen (if you are eating enough). Now only will your muscles get bigger, they will look harder and denser as well. Famous bodybuilders who used 5x5 include Reg Park and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

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5X5 FOR BEGINNERS:

This is one of the most common uses of the 5x5 program. People who are new to weight training (have been training for less than two years) get a lot of benefits from 5x5.

In the beginning, weight training is all about learning movements or teaching the nervous system to execute new patterns powerfully and efficiently. The reason that many coaches (including myself) use 5x5 for beginners is that they need to practice movements like squats and presses enough to hone their technique. This is better done with the higher volume of 5x5 than something like 3x3.

They also need to be able to lift heavy enough to get stronger and place adequate stress on the muscles and tendons to get them ready to lift heavier long term. With 5x5 the loads are light enough that beginners can learn good form without trying to grind out reps with weights that are way too heavy. Injury is more easily avoided this way.

The reason 5x5 is great for beginners is that they need to work on a wide range of strength qualities. 5x5 delivers on strength, technique work, hypertrophy, and connective tissue integrity.

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5X5 FOR ADVANCED LIFTERS:

Over time 5x5 may stop being as effective once a certain level of strength has been reached. This is because training stress is relative. Someone with a 600lb deadlift is placing way more stress on their body than someone who only pulls 225. When a strong lifter is using loads close enough to their 1 rep max to elicit a strength response, consistently using the high volume of 5x5 program can be a recipe for overtraining and injury.

However, smart lifters and coaches write overload or overreach phases into their programs. This is followed by a de-load week. The idea being to temporarily use heavier loads and higher volume, at a level a lifter shouldn't sustain long term, followed by a period of rest, recovery and easy lifting, in order to create super compensation. In other words, take a week to reach past your current level of training stress, into the zone where you would over train if you did it for too long, and then follow it with a strategic de-load week. This will help you get stronger and break plateaus.

Advanced lifters also implement “assistance lifts” into their programming. This is designed to bring up weaker body parts or portions of their lifts. 5x5 can be used with many of these exercises, because they are not as fatiguing or reliant on the central nervous system, and hypertrophy is often the goal.

This is where 5x5 comes in for the advanced lifter. Although 5x5 should not be used all of the time at this level. It can be used as a strategic overload protocol in a lifter's overall program. Sometimes you have to go all out to reach a new level of strength.

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5X5 FOR ATHLETES:

Because 5x5 can be used for any of the above goals, and because many athletes fit into one or more of these categories, 5x5 can be a very effective tool to increase performance. Athletes who are new to weight training will benefit because they will become stronger and more skilled in functional movement patterns (squats, deadlifts, lunges, presses, etc). These movements will have a lot of carryover into their sport. Athletes such as football players and fighters looking to add size or move up a weight class while getting stronger will find that 5x5 allows them to do this while allowing enough recovery for them to excel in their sport.

Advanced athletes in their off season, looking to add brute strength, can use 5x5 as an overload protocol to reach new levels of strength and power at a time when their sport isn't too demanding of their ability to recover.

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5X5 BEGINNERS PROGRAM

Those who are new to weight training need to develop strength, bone and joint integrity, flexibility, proper technique, and a balanced, functional body in order to keep making steady gains. Many new trainees and athletes who get into weight training are looking to build muscle and get stronger. While these are the main goals of this program, to ignore any of the aforementioned qualities will inevitably result in a lifter with weak links and a laundry list of nagging injuries that will keep them from becoming the strongest version of themselves.

Beginning on the path of strength is all about practice. In the beginner program, you practice these exercises. Begin with an empty barbell and do them over and over, increasing the challenge slightly each time until you have mastered the skill of lifting heavy weights with perfect form.

By doing this, you will lay the foundation for a powerful, balanced body capable of all sorts of feats of strength and athleticism. As you become more skilled in your barbell training, you will notice that everyday tasks, performance in sports, and virtually every other type of movement will become more powerful and more graceful. You will build both strength and muscle.

Quite possibly the best part of being brand new to weightlifting is the rapid, consistent gains you can make from doing just about anything. Newbies also have a hard time overtraining. New lifters without any sort of guidance can follow terrible programs and yet still make some amazing gains in a very short period of time.

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A common mistake is to think that just because beginners make easy gains, it doesn't matter what program they follow. If you're smart, you'll realize that this is ridiculous. New lifters should capitalize on their ability to adapt and make progress quickly by following a program that is designed to help them reach their full potential.

This program was designed with that concept specifically in mind. The exercises are all focused on involving the most amount of muscle, training the body to move efficiently, and prepare the nervous system to lift some heavy weight. Each workout will challenge your whole body, and teach it to move powerfully through a full range of motion.

You will develop absolute strength and build quality mass with exercises like squats, deadlifts, rows, and presses. You will also develop relative strength with loaded bodyweight exercises like chin-ups and dips. The exercises are structured in a way that will allow you to develop evenly and build a body that is both stronger and more balanced.

Because 5x5 allows both high time under tension and relatively heavy load, your body will grow. It is not uncommon for lifters using 5x5 to put on 40 lbs of muscle in the first year.

Looking at the program, you may think that it is extremely basic, and that such results couldn't possibly come from doing only three or four exercises per workout. Beginners often fall prey to the type of thinking found in mainstream bodybuilding and fitness magazines that says you need to do thirty-some-odd sets of six exercises per muscle. In my experience, what beginners really need to do in order to make the best possible gains is to nail the basics. As countless strength athletes and bodybuilders before us have demonstrated, you can build a massively strong body using only "the basics" found in this program.

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HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM:

- Begin the program with an empty barbell or just body weight for movements like dips and chin-ups. This is all you will do for the first week.
- Each workout, add 5 lbs to the bar or dip belt (add 10 lbs for deadlifts).
- Use this program for as long as you are still experiencing strength gains and not overtraining.
- Perform 2-3 warm-up sets for each exercise before beginning your first working set, using progressively heavier weight.
- Rest as long as you feel is necessary between sets. 1-3 minutes usually does it.
- When you reach the point where you cannot use more weight for 5 sets of 5 on a given exercise, stay at that same working weight. If you cannot increase the weight for more than three consecutive workouts, take 10% off the bar and work back up, 5 lbs at a time. This is called “stalling”, and is a normal part of progress with 5x5.
- When you start to stall on a regular basis, it is time to move on to the intermediate program.

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1. Week									
	Day 1	Squat	Weight:	Bench Press	Weight:	Weighted Chinups	Weight:		
1		5x5		5x5		5x5			
2		5x5		5x5		5x5			
3		5x5		5x5		5x5			
4		5x5		5x5		5x5			
	Day 2	Squat	Weight:	Overhead Press	Weight:	Deadlift	Weight:	Weighted Dips	Weight:
1		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
2		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
4		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
	Day 3	Squat	Weight:	Bench Press	Weight:	Barbell Rows	Weight:		
1		5x5		5x5		5x5			
2		5x5		5x5		5x5			
3		5x5		5x5		5x5			
4		5x5		5x5		5x5			

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EXERCISES:

SQUAT:



The Back Squat is one of the best exercises around for building total body strength, hip flexibility, and muscle, especially in the back and legs. When you learn how to squat and become strong at it, your body will start making a dramatic transformation. The squat is also one of the most basic, useful movements humans are capable of performing, and is essential for building a strong body.

Start with your feet at the width that feels natural for you to perform a squat (make sure you are wearing solid, flat soled shoes). Think of your feet as having “four corners” that are glued to the floor. Brace your abs, spread your knees and sit back between your legs. When you reach the bottom of the squat, drive your feet into the floor and bring your hips up and forward until you reach the top.

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BENCH PRESS:



The bench press is one of the best builders of upper body strength and mass. It is a great developer of the chest, shoulders, and triceps. It is most people's favorite exercise, and is great for building pressing strength.

After you lie back onto the bench and get under the bar, tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet underneath you and back towards your head, drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is an arch in your lower back. Un-rack the bar and bring it down to the bottom of your pecs. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar back up into the locked out top position.

WEIGHTED CHIN-UPS:



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Weighted Chins are great for building upper body strength. They have been called “the upper body squat” because of its effectiveness at building a strong back and relative strength, two of the foundations of all strength and athleticism.

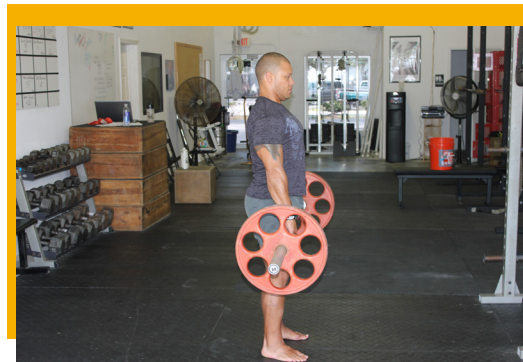
Begin hanging from the chin-up bar with your palms facing you. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and think of pulling the bar down to meet your sternum. Lower back down all the way, but keep your back engaged at the bottom instead of just hanging from your ligaments. Once you can do bodyweight chin-ups for the prescribed sets, start adding weight with a dip belt and a plate or two.

OVERHEAD PRESS:

The Overhead Press requires balance, core strength, and upper body strength to perform. It is a mainstay for anyone who needs strong, stable shoulders. It develops your pressing strength in a standing position, which is how you would most often use it outside of the gym.

Starting with the bar in your hands right in front of your chest, squeeze your lats, quads and shoulder blades, brace your abs, and press the bar upward until your elbows are locked out. Keep your heels on the floor throughout the movement.

DEADLIFT:



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The Deadlift is one of my favorite exercises for building total body strength and correcting many of the posture problems caused by sitting at a desk all day. When done right, the Deadlift recruits every muscle in the body, and builds a strong back and strong glutes. If the chest and biceps are the “show” muscles, the back, glutes, and legs are the “go” muscles.

Start with your feet slightly narrower than shoulder width. Grip the bar right over your shoelaces, dip your hips down until your spine is totally neutral. Keeping your neck in line with the rest of your spine, begin the pull by driving your knees back and your hips forward. Keeping your spine neutral and the bar close to your shins and thighs, lead your torso upward with your chest, squeeze your lats, and lock out the pull.

WEIGHTED DIPS:



Like Weighted Chins, Dips are great for developing the upper body in such a way that requires lots of stability and relative strength.

Begin with your arms straight, and your knees tucked. Keeping your elbows from flaring, lower yourself down towards the bars until your upper arm is parallel to the floor. Press yourself back up into the locked out position. Once you can perform the prescribed number of dips with bodyweight, increase the resistance with a dip belt and a plate or two.

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BARBELL ROWS:



Barbell Rows are a great developer of the upper back. A strong upper back is crucial for both your overall strength (especially in the deadlift) and structural strength (a weak upper back is often the culprit for bad posture).

Start by standing over a bar like you're setting up for a deadlift. Pick the bar up off of the floor while keeping your knees slightly bent and your spine straight, but parallel to the floor. Pull the bar up and into your chest, squeezing your lats at the top.

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5X5 INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM

The intermediate stage of your strength evolution represents an especially tricky time. Gains start to stall, and you can't just go in and do 5x5 for all of the lifts anymore. At this point you are strong enough that too much volume and intensity has the potential to wreck you.

During this time strategy, loading protocols, and cycling volume and intensity become important. Once you get past the beginner stage, working smart goes from being important to essential.

With a couple of exceptions, the exercises in this program are the same as those in the beginner program. Squats, Deadlifts, Presses, Chins and Dips are still the best exercises around for building strength and muscle. The exercises don't need to change, but the parameters do.

This program is designed to take the base level of strength you've already built and take it to the next level.

Because of a good foundation of strength and good form in the main lifts, you now stand to gain more from working with higher intensity and lower volume. By the time you start this program, you should already be confident in your ability to move weight with solid form.

You also have a clear picture of how much you can handle right now and won't run into the common beginner problem of attempting more weight than you should, or grinding it out with terrible form. At this stage sets in the 1-5 rep range become a valuable tool. This program is built around a concept called "ramping". You will start at a certain

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weight, and increase it by a certain amount for each of the sets until you reach your heaviest set, which you will try to top each week. Because you are only using this weight for one set instead of five, you can handle more, and the overall volume won't be too high.

The intermediate stage of lifting is a true test of patience, discipline, and commitment to strength. You will no longer enjoy the quick, consistent gains of a beginner. However, this time can also be encouraging a lot of fun. Now, you'll begin to get a sense of how this stuff really works – and what you will someday be capable of. With the right program, a solid foundation, and the right attitude, you will become stronger than you thought possible, and closer to becoming the strongest version of yourself.

HOW TO FOLLOW THIS PROGRAM:

Test your 5 rep max on all of the lifts in this program over the course of a week or work from the weights you worked up to in the beginner program.

All sets are “ramped sets.” Meaning you will work up to a set of the indicated amount of reps. For example, “1x5” on your Monday squats does not mean just one set of 5 reps, it means sets of 5 from your starting weight repeated until you reach your current or a new 5 rep max. Stop increasing the weight when it is too heavy to complete five reps. Your starting weight is half your 5 rep max in any given exercise.

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Increases in the weight of each set should be between 10 and 15% of your 5 rep max. 12.5% is a good average.

Example:

5rep max= 250 lbs.

12.5% of 250 is approximately 30 lbs.

set 1= 135 lbs. x5

set 2= 165 lbs. x5

set 3= 195 lbs. x5

set 4= 225 lbs. x5

set 5= 255 lbs. x5

Squats on day two (2x5) should be lighter than on days 1 and 3. Use 10-15% less weight than you would on the other days and work up to 2 sets of 5 at the same weight.

Week 5 is a de-load week, during which you will switch to 3x3 and drop the 3rd day workout. Work up to 3 sets of 3 using around 65% of your 5 rep max.

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ADVANCED 5X5



Week							
	Day 1	Squat	Weight: (heaviest set)	Bench Press	Weight: (heaviest set)	Barbell Row	Weight: (heaviest set)
1		1x5		1x5		1x5	
2		1x5		1x5		1x5	
3		1x5		1x5		1x5	
4		1x5		1x5		1x5	
5		3x3		3x3		3x3	
	Day 2	Squat	Weight: (heaviest set)	Overhead Press	Weight: (heaviest set)	Deadlift	Weight: (heaviest set)
1		2x5		1x5		1x5	
2		2x5		1x5		1x5	
3		2x5		1x5		1x5	
4		2x5		1x5		1x5	
5		3x3		3x3		3x3	
	Day 3	Front Squat	Weight: (heaviest set)	Weighted Dips	Weight: (heaviest set)	Weighted Chin-ups	Weight: (heaviest set)
1		1x3		1x3		1x3	
2		1x3		1x3		1x3	
3		1x3		1x3		1x3	
4		1x3		1x3		1x3	
5		3x3		3x3		3x3	

THE GROW STRONGER METHOD

ADVANCED 5X5

EXERCISES:

SQUAT:



The Back Squat is one of the best exercises around for building total body strength, hip flexibility, and muscle, especially in the back and legs. When you learn how to squat and become strong at it, your body will start making a dramatic transformation. The squat is also one of the most basic, useful movements humans are capable of performing, and is essential for building a strong body.

Start with your feet at the width that feels natural for you to perform a squat (make sure you are wearing solid, flat soled shoes). Think of your feet as having “four corners” that are glued to the floor. Brace your abs, spread your knees and sit back between your legs. When you reach the bottom of the squat, drive your feet into the floor and bring your hips up and forward until you reach the top.

THE GROW STRONGER METHOD

ADVANCED 5X5

FRONT SQUAT:



The Front Squat is one of the best exercises for building a body that is both strong and balanced. It forces the body into a position that will point out muscular imbalances and engages the core in a way that few other exercises can. Obviously, it is amazing for developing powerful legs and glutes.

Hold the bar like you would for an overhead press, create a shelf with your chest and shoulders by squeezing your shoulder blades together, keep your upper back tall, and your elbows up. The bar rests on your fingertips with the weight across your collar bones. Your hands only touch the bar to keep it on this “shelf” and do not bear any of the weight.

Start with your feet at the width that feels natural for you to perform a squat (make sure you are wearing solid, flat soled shoes). Think of your feet as having “four corners” that are glued to the floor. Brace your abs, spread your knees and sit down between your legs. To return, keep your spine tall, straight, and vertical and drive your feet into the floor as you extend your legs until are fully standing again.

THE **CROW STRONGER METHOD**

ADVANCED 5X5

BENCH PRESS:



The bench press is one of the best builders of upper body strength and mass. It is a great developer of the chest, shoulders, and triceps. It is most people's favorite exercise, and is great for building pressing strength.

After you lie back onto the bench and get under the bar, tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet underneath you and back towards your head, and drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is an arch in your lower back. Un-rack the bar and bring it down to the bottom of your pecs. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar back up into the locked out top position.

WEIGHTED CHIN-UPS:

Begin hanging from the chin-up bar with your palms facing you. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and think of pulling the bar down to meet your sternum. Lower down all the way, but keep your back engaged at the bottom instead of just hanging from your ligaments.

Use a dip belt and a plate or two to increase resistance.

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ADVANCED 5X5

OVERHEAD PRESS:

The Overhead Press requires balance, core strength, and upper body strength to perform. It is a mainstay for anyone who needs strong, stable shoulders. It develops your pressing strength in a standing position, which is how you would most often use it outside of the gym.

Starting with the bar in your hands, right in front of your chest, squeeze your lats, quads and shoulder blades, brace your abs, and press the bar upward until your elbows are locked out. Keep your heels on the floor throughout the movement.

DEADLIFT:

Start with your feet slightly narrower than shoulder width. Grip the bar right over your shoelaces, dip your hips down until your spine is totally neutral. Keeping your neck in line with the rest of your spine, begin the pull by driving your knees back and your hips forward. Keeping your spine neutral and the bar close to your shins and thighs, lead your torso upward with your chest, squeeze your lats, and lock out the pull.

WEIGHTED DIPS:

Like Weighted Chins, Dips are great for developing the upper body in such a way that requires lots of stability and relative strength.

Begin with your arms straight, and your knees tucked. Keeping your elbows from flaring, lower yourself down towards the bars until your upper arm is parallel to the floor. Press yourself back up into the locked out position.

Increase resistance with a dip belt and a plate or two.

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BARBELL ROWS:



Barbell Rows are a great developer of the upper back. A strong upper back is crucial for both overall strength (especially in the deadlift) and structural strength (a weak upper back is often the culprit for bad posture).

Pick the bar up off of the floor while keeping your knees slightly bent and your spine straight, but parallel to the floor. Pull the bar up and into your chest, squeezing your lats at the top.

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ADVANCED 5X5

5X5 ADVANCED PROGRAM

Advanced lifters often find themselves in a tricky spot when it comes to which program they should use. At a certain level of strength and training experience, progress tends to slow down, injuries mount, and instead of making the type of steady progress experienced by beginners, gains come in unpredictable spurts.

To top this off, training parameters that once spurred progress no longer work, as the body of an advanced lifter adapts more quickly to new training demands. Some become frustrated and give up. Others hop from program to program, looking for the right one that will bring them quick gains.

Despite often being called “the basics”, exercises like Squats, Deadlifts, and Presses still have a lot to offer the advanced lifter, even for those who do not compete in these lifts. What becomes important when you are really strong in these movements and want to get stronger is strategic week-to-week progression, intelligent use of exercise variety, and recovery. These are the principals this program is based on.

Although this program is focused on the big lifts, about half of the exercises were picked to address weak points and imbalances that often stop progress in the big lifts. Squats are great for developing the entire lower body, but what happens when one leg starts to contribute more than the other? This is where single leg exercises like lunges and step-ups come in.

Deadlifts are often missed because of a weak upper back, and presses are often missed because of weak triceps. This is where dips, rows, and top half bench presses come in and build up these frequently lagging areas.

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ADVANCED 5X5



As for week-to-week progression and recovery, a strategy I often use to keep strength gains coming is a four-week training cycle that looks like this:

Week 1: Heavy, low volume: 3x3

Week 2: Heavier, slightly higher volume: 5x2

Week 3: Heavy, high volume (overload week): 5x5

Week 4: Light, moderate volume (De-load): 3x10

Due to the high volume and heavy loads possible with 5x5 advanced lifters can't use a 5x5 program for weeks at a time, especially when the program is centered on heavy barbell movements. However, we can leverage the combination of high intensity and high volume that 5x5 represents to stimulate the body to over-compensate and get stronger.

5x5 may often be unsustainable for an advanced lifter, but when used for short periods it is a great tool for blowing past boundaries and growing stronger. When followed by a week of low volume and low intensity, the body recovers and even over-compensates from the high levels of training stress. Remember, overtraining is most often caused by spending too much time in the overreaching zone of training stress.

Although this program is higher in total volume than the original Grow Stronger Method, it is low enough to allow for full recovery in an advanced lifter. A key part of any program is sustainability, and this four-week cycle can be used as many times as necessary.

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When following this program, push yourself on the main lifts (A and B) but do not feel the need to max out on the assistance exercises (C and D). Focus on getting all reps with perfect form using a weight that is challenging. The main lifts are an end in and of themselves, the assistance work a means of getting stronger in the big lifts.

Even if you have traveled far down the path of strength, this program will support you in becoming the strongest version of yourself.

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Week									
	Day 1	Deadlift	Weight:	Bench Press	Weight:	Weighted dips	Weight:	Barbell rows	Weight:
1		3x3		3x3		5x5		3x10	
2		5x2		5x2		5x5		3x10	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		3x10	
4		3x10		3x10		5x5		3x10	
	Day 2	Front squat	Weight:	Over-head press	Weight:	Dumbbell Step-up	Weight:	Single Arm dumbbell push press	Weight:
1		3x3		3x3		5x5		3x10/side	
2		5x2		5x2		5x5		3x10/side	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		3x10/side	
4		3x10		3x10		5x5		3x10/side	

Week									
	Day 3	Bench Press	Weight:	Deadlift	Weight:	Top half bench press from pins	Weight:	Back extension	Weight:
1		3x3		3x3		3x10		5x5	
2		5x2		5x2		3x10		5x5	
3		5x5		5x5		3x10		5x5	
4		3x10		3x10		3x10		5x5	
	Day 4	Overhead Press	Weight:	Front squat	Weight:	Weighted chin-ups	Weight:	Front loaded reverse deficit lunges	Weight:
1		3x3		3x3		5x5		3x10/side	
2		5x2		5x2		5x5		3x10/side	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		3x10/side	
4		3x10		3x10		5x5		3x10/side	

THE GROW STRONGER METHOD

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EXERCISES:

DEADLIFT:



The Deadlift is one of my favorite exercises for building total body strength and correcting many of the posture problems caused by sitting at a desk all day. When done right, the Deadlift recruits every muscle in the body, and builds a strong back and glutes. If the chest and biceps are the “show” muscles, the back, glutes, and legs are the “go” muscles.

Start with your feet slightly narrower than shoulder width. Grip the bar right over your shoelaces, dip your hips down until your spine is totally neutral. Keeping your neck in line with the rest of your spine, begin the pull by driving your knees back and your hips forward. Keeping your spine neutral and the bar close to your shins and thighs, lead your torso upward with your chest, squeeze your lats, and lock out the pull.

BENCH PRESS:

The bench press is one of the best builders of upper body strength and mass. It is a great developer of the chest, shoulders, and triceps. It is most people’s favorite exercise, and is great for building pressing strength.

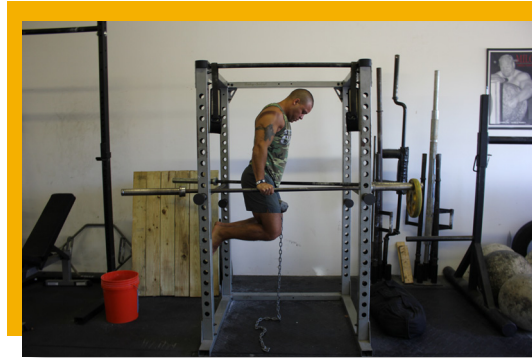
After you lie back onto the bench and get under the bar, tuck your shoulder blades

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under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet underneath you and back towards your head, drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is an arch in your lower back. Un-rack the bar and bring it down to the bottom of your pecs. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar back up into the locked out top position.

WEIGHTED DIPS:



Like Weighted Chins, Dips are great for developing the upper body in such a way that requires lots of stability and relative strength. They are also great for strengthening the triceps, which will help your bench and overhead presses.

Begin with your arms straight, and your knees tucked. Keeping your elbows from flaring, lower yourself down towards the bars until your upper arm is parallel to the floor. Press yourself back up into the locked out position.

To increase resistance use a dip belt and a plate or two.

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BARBELL ROWS:



Barbell Rows are a great developer of the upper back. A strong upper back is crucial for both overall strength (especially in the deadlift) and structural strength (a weak upper back is often the culprit for bad posture).

Pick the bar up off of the floor while keeping your knees slightly bent and your spine straight, but parallel to the floor. Pull the bar up and into your chest, squeezing your lats at the top.

FRONT SQUAT:

The Front Squat is one of the best exercises for building a body that is both strong and balanced. It forces the body into a position that will point out muscular imbalances and engages the core in a way that few other exercises can. Obviously it is amazing for developing powerful legs and glutes. Many lifters find that after months or years of focusing on the Back Squat, building a strong front squat is just what they need to increase their numbers on the Back Squat.

Hold the bar like you would for an overhead press, create a shelf with your chest and shoulders by squeezing your shoulder blades, keeping your upper back tall, and bringing your elbows up. Your hands are only touching the bar to keep it on this “shelf” and are not bearing any of the weight.

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Start with your feet at a width that feels natural for you to perform a squat (make sure you are wearing solid, flat soled shoes). Think of your feet as having “four corners” that are glued to the floor. Brace your abs, spread your knees and sit down between your legs. Keep your spine tall, straight, and vertical and drive your feet down into the floor until you return to the top.

OVERHEAD PRESS:

The Overhead Press requires balance, core strength, and upper body strength to perform. It is a mainstay for anyone who needs strong, stable shoulders. It develops your pressing strength in a standing position, which is how you would most often use it outside of the gym. Just like the front squat helps the back squat, a strong overhead press will help you build a powerful bench press.

Starting with the bar in your hands right in front of your chest, squeeze your lats, quads and shoulder blades, brace your abs, and press the bar upward until your elbows are locked out. Keep your heels on the floor throughout the movement.

DUMBBELL STEP-UP:

The Step-up is a great exercise for building strong and balanced legs through the whole range of motion. Making sure both legs are equally strong and mobile is crucial to long term strength.

Start with a pair of dumbbells in your hands and a box slightly taller than knee height in front of you. Step up onto the box with your front leg and using only that leg, step both feet all the way up onto the box.

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SINGLE ARM DUMBBELL PUSH PRESS:



This exercise is great for making sure the shoulders are balanced in relation to each other, increasing pressing speed and strength, and training the core to stabilize unbalanced loads overhead. It was a favorite exercise of early lifters and strongmen, who were known for their powerful, balanced physiques.

Take a single dumbbell into the beginning position of a standing press. Brace your core, and bend your knees slightly. Explode upward with your legs to launch the dumbbell upward. Use your shoulder and tricep to lock out the weight.

TOP HALF DEADLIFT FROM PINS:



Top half exercises are great tools for two reasons: they develop strength in the lockout portion of the lift (which is often where lifters are weak), and it can be loaded heavier than your max because it is only half of the exercise. Top half exercises are great for

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activating and overloading the nervous system.

Begin in a power rack with the bar resting on pins that are at or just above your knees. Keeping your center of gravity directly under you, grip the bar, drive the hips forward, and bring the bar to lockout.

TOP HALF BENCH PRESS FROM PINS:



This is a valuable exercise for building strength in the lockout portion of the bench press, as well as teaching lifters how to explode through the middle part of the press. It is also great for stimulating the nervous system, because you can do this lift with more than your one rep max bench press.

Starting with a bench in a power rack, set the bar at the height that has your elbows at a 90 degree angle at the bottom of the press. Tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet back towards your head, and drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is a slight arch in your lower back. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar up into the locked out top position. The bar should touch the pins at the bottom of each rep.

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BACK EXTENSION:

One thing extremely important in all of the big lifts is a strong lower back. Back extensions are a great assistance exercise for Squats, Deadlifts, and Overhead Presses.

In a back extension machine (Roman Chair), set the support so that it meets the crease of your hip. Start face down, keeping your back straight, raise your torso until your back is in line with your legs. Lower back down.

FRONT LOADED REVERSE DEFICIT LUNGES:



This movement is great for training balance, thoracic extension, hip mobility, quad strength, and coordination. Because it is a lift most people never do, it offers the benefits of a totally new training stimulus. Because it is a reverse lunge, it is easier on the knees, something more battered veteran lifters will be thankful for.

Holding the bar like you would for an overhead press, create a shelf with your chest and shoulders by squeezing your shoulder blades, keeping your upper back tall, and bringing your elbows up and in. Your hands only touch the bar enough to keep it on this “shelf” and do not bear any of the weight.

Begin by standing on a short box (less than a foot tall) and step backwards until your

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back leg is almost fully extended and your front thigh is parallel to the ground. Use the front leg to step your back foot up onto the box.

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5X5 FOR ATHLETES

Many coaches out there argue that athletes need programs custom tailored to their sport, claiming that a soccer player or a baseball player needs a drastically different program from a football player or a basketball player. There is some truth to this, especially in sports where there is a high level of specialization and overuse injury such as baseball. For athletes like kickers, pitchers, and tennis players, the emphasis of a program should be to maintain the health and functionality of the body, meaning there are certain exercises that may be counterproductive.

All athletes however, will benefit from getting stronger and more explosive in the basics. Athletes in all sports have this in common: the need to develop total body strength, explosiveness, flexibility, stability, relative strength, and strong, resilient muscles, all while leaving enough in the tank to kick ass at their sport.

This is exactly what this program is designed to accomplish. Each of the three weekly workouts begin with an explosive movement to develop speed and power. Jumping variations and power cleans are some of the best exercises out there for creating an athlete who can use his strength quickly and move faster than the competition.

These explosive movements are followed by two or three strength movements selected for their direct carry-over into athletic performance. Basically, getting stronger at these exercises will make you a tougher, more powerful, more explosive, more stable athlete.

5x5 is a great training parameter for athletes because it can be loaded heavily enough for neural strength gains, allows the athlete enough reps to practice the exercises to a point of mastery, and allows the athlete to put on some functional muscle mass all at

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the same time. When used with only 3-4 exercises, it shouldn't make you too sore or tight (except maybe during the first week).

The off season program uses 5x5 exclusively for these reasons. However, 5x5 can be too much volume for an athlete (especially a strong one) to maintain during season. I have written a program that allows you to maintain the strength and size you worked so hard to gain in the off season while leaving you with enough energy to play hard.

In this program, all jumping variations have been reduced to 3x3, and power cleans to 6x1. This is meant to help you to continue to develop explosiveness without overtraining. Half of the strength exercises have been cut down to 3x3 for the same reason: to maintain strength and prevent overtraining. Exercises will alternate 3x3 and 5x5 week to week to help maintain both strength and mass.

Strength is the foundation of all athleticism, and if you follow this program, you will become stronger in every way.

1. Week		2. A		3. B		4. C		5. D	
	Day 1	Box Jump	Weight:	Front squat	Weight:	Overhead Press	Weight:		
1		5x5		5x5		5x5			
2		5x5		5x5		5x5			
3		5x5		5x5		5x5			
4		5x5		5x5		5x5			
	Day 2	Broad Jump	Weight:	Deadlift	Weight:	Weighted Dips	Weight:		
1		5x5		5x5		5x5			
2		5x5		5x5		5x5			
3		5x5		5x5		5x5			
4		5x5		5x5		5x5			
	Day 3	Power Clean	Weight:	Bench Press	Weight:	Weighted Pull-ups	Weight:	Dumbbell Lunges	Weight:
1		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
2		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	
4		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5	

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FOR ATHLETES IN SEASON

Week									
	Day 1	Box Jump	Weight:	Front squat	Weight:	Overhead Press	Weight:		
1		3x3		3x3		5x5			
2		3x3		5x5		3x3			
3		3x3		3x3		5x5			
4		3x3		5x5		3x3			
	Day 2	Broad Jump	Weight:	Deadlift	Weight:	Weighted Dips	Weight:		
1		3x3		3x3		5x5			
2		3x3		5x5		3x3			
3		3x3		3x3		5x5			
4		3x3		5x5		3x3			
	Day 3	Power Clean	Weight:	Bench Press	Weight:	Weighted Pull-ups	Weight:	Dumbbell Lunges	Weight:
1		6x1		3x3		5x5		5x5	
2		6x1		5x5		3x3		3x3	
3		6x1		3x3		5x5		5x5	
4		6x1		5x5		3x3		3x3	

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EXERCISES:

BOX JUMP:



This is a great exercise for developing powerfully explosive legs, increasing your vertical jump, and improving coordination.

Squat down about half way while bringing your hands down beside and slightly behind your hips. Explode with your legs and swing your arms upward to jump as high as you can onto a box.

FRONT SQUAT:

The Front Squat is one of the best exercises for building a body that is both strong and balanced. It forces the body into a position that will point out muscular imbalances and engages the core in a way that few other exercises can. Obviously it is amazing for developing powerful legs and glutes.

Hold a bar like you would for an overhead press, create a shelf with your chest and shoulders by squeezing your shoulder blades together, keep your upper back tall, and your elbows up. The bar rests on your fingertips with the weight across your collar bones. Your hands only touch the bar to keep it on this “shelf” and do not bear any of the weight.

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Start with your feet at the width that feels natural for you to perform a squat (make sure you are wearing solid, flat soled shoes). Think of your feet as having “four corners” that are glued to the floor. Brace your abs, spread your knees and sit down between your legs. To return keep your spine tall, straight, and vertical and drive your feet into the floor as you extend your legs until are fully standing again.

OVERHEAD PRESS:

The Overhead Press requires balance, core strength, and upper body strength to perform. It is a mainstay for anyone who needs strong, stable shoulders.

Starting with the bar in your hands right in front of your chest, squeeze your lats, quads and shoulder blades, brace your abs, and press the bar upward until your elbows are locked out. Keep your heels on the floor throughout the movement.

BROAD JUMP:



The Broad Jump is an excellent test of power and a good indicator of how physically aggressive someone can be in competition. Like the box jump, performing it will develop explosive capacity in your legs and hips.

Squat down about half way while bringing your hands down beside and slightly behind your hips. Explode forwards and upwards, drive your hips forward and swing your arms forward to jump as far in front of you as possible.

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DEADLIFT:



The Deadlift is one of my favorite exercises for building total body strength and correcting many of the posture problems caused by sitting at a desk all day. When done right, the Deadlift recruits every muscle in the body, and builds a strong back and strong glutes. If the chest and biceps are the “show” muscles, the back, glutes, and legs are the “go” muscles.

Start with your feet slightly narrower than shoulder width. Grip the bar right over your shoelaces, dip your hips down until your spine is totally neutral. Keeping your neck in line with the rest of your spine, begin the pull by driving your knees back and your hips forward. Keeping your spine neutral and the bar close to your shins and thighs, lead your torso upward with your chest, squeeze your lats, and lock out the pull.

POWER CLEAN:



The Power Clean trains just about everything an athlete needs to train, all in a single

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movement. It will make you stronger, better at jumping, and more prepared to absorb the force of an opponent in every joint and muscle in your body. Because it is a complex movement, it will make you aware of how your whole body moves as a unit, and therefore help you become more coordinated at moving.

Stand in front of the barbell so that your shins are almost touching it. Dip down with your hips, push your chest out, and flatten your back. Grip the bar. Begin the pull by

taking the knees back and out of the path of the bar. As the bar passes your knees, drive your hips forward explosively while pulling the bar upwards with your arms and traps. When the bar clears your chest, bring your elbows up and rotate your hands under the bar to create a shelf with your chest and shoulders. Catch the bar on this shelf and bend your knees slightly to absorb the force of the barbell.

BENCH PRESS:



The bench press is one of the best builders of upper body strength and mass. A big bench press will help you to be immovable to your opponents, and will help you to move them.

After you lie back onto the bench and get under the bar, tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet underneath you and

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back towards your head, drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is a slight arch in your lower back. Un-rack the bar and bring it down to the bottom of your pecs. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar back up into the locked out top position.

WEIGHTED CHIN-UPS:

Weighted Chins are great for building upper body strength. It has been called “the upper body squat” because of its effectiveness at building a strong back, one of the foundations of all athleticism.

Begin hanging from the chin-up bar with your palms facing you. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and think of pulling the bar down to meet your sternum. Lower down all the way, but keep your back engaged at the bottom instead of just hanging from your ligaments.

To add resistance, use a dip belt and a plate or two.

DUMBBELL LUNGES:

The lunge is a movement essential to developing athleticism. It is one of the most basic and most used movements in sports and in life, requiring balance, flexibility, strength, and coordination to perform.

With dumbbells in your hands, start with you feet together and step forward with one leg so that your back leg is close to fully extended, lower until your front leg is close to 90 degrees. Using your front leg, push back into the starting position.

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5X5 FOR HYPERTROPHY

Hypertrophy training often doesn't get much credit outside of bodybuilding circles. Many strength athletes tend to think of adding muscle mass as a unwanted side effect of their training. The thinking tends to be something like "Why would I train specifically to add mass? If I wanted more mass, I'd just stick to my current strength training program and eat more."

For athletes who have an easy time putting on muscle, this may be good enough, but what about lifters, athletes, gym rats, and regular people who want to be much more muscular than they are now? What about intermediate and advanced lifters who feel that more mass is the key to more strength? What about the football player who needs to gain lots of muscle? This is where hypertrophy training becomes useful.

Many hypertrophy programs are built around high volume, high rep sets of compound and isolation lifts, creating a lot of time under tension and a lot of tissue breakdown. This is a great strategy for pure hypertrophy, but it doesn't allow a lot of room for strength work. If you're anything like me, gaining, or at least maintaining your hard earned strength is important to you, even if strength isn't your primary goal. It's no use gaining all of that muscle if you aren't going to be considerably stronger than when you started.

Also, if you only work in the 8-12 rep range, you may swell up, but you won't maximize you hypertrophy potential. This is because the higher rep ranges are great at stimulating sarcoplasmic hypertrophy, (an increase in the fluid volume of the muscle) but not so great at building myofibrillar hypertrophy (an increase in the size and number of the actual muscle cells). In order to build muscle that is big and full looking, as well as hard, dense, and strong you need to train both.

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5x5 generates enough time under tension to cause a lot of muscle gain, but is low enough rep-wise to allow for strength gains and myofibrillar hypertrophy. When the 5x5 heavy compound exercises are used in combination with high rep drop sets hypertrophy is inevitable, and the muscle you build will be strong, dense, and functional.

The workouts all start with a heavy top half movement. This activates the nervous system, and places a lot of stress on the muscles used because they can be loaded heavier than with a full range of motion movement.

Next, we have an extended range of motion exercise (like a snatch grip deadlift) or where this isn't possible, an exercise with a pause at the bottom. These are great for hypertrophy because they force the muscles to contract continually through a greater range of motion or do extra work to move the weight out of the pause at the bottom.

Both of these result in more work, greater time under tension, and ultimately more muscle. Finally, the workout ends with drop sets of exercises that target the muscles used in the big lifts. These are purely to exhaust the muscle, increase time under tension and initiate sarcoplasmic hypertrophy.

Although I am not a pro bodybuilder, I am definitely no stranger to getting bigger and stronger. Because of my background in football and strongman, I always needed the mass I gained from my hypertrophy training to assist me in growing stronger, not just looking jacked (although there is no shame in wanting to be jacked for the sake of being jacked). Even though the main goal of this program is to build muscle, you can rest assured that you will not sacrifice strength, power, or athleticism for the sake of getting huge. This is show and go muscle. Enjoy your gains.

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Week													
	Day 1	Top half bench press from pins	Weight:	Top half deadlift from pins	Weight:	Bench press w/ bottom pause	Weight:	Snatch Grip Deadlift	Weight:	Dumbbell bench press drop set	Weight:	Cable Tricep pushdown drop set	
1		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5		x5	
2		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5		x5	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5		x5	
4		3x10		3x10		3x10		3x10		x5		x5	
	Day 2	Top half seated overhead press from pins	Weight:	Top half squat from pins	Weight:	Overhead press w/ bottom pause	Weight:	Front squat w. bottom pause	Weight:	Dumbbell Lunges	Weight:		
1		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5			
2		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5			
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5			
4		3x10		3x10		3x10		3x10		x5			

Week													
	Day 3	Top half deadlift from pins	Weight:	Top half bench press from pins	Weight:	Snatch grip deadlift	Weight:	Bench press w/ bottom pause	Weight:	Barbell row drop set	Weight:	Seated Decline-Dumbbell Bicep Curl Drop set	
1		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5		x5	
2		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5		x5	
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5		x5	
4		3x10		3x10		3x10		3x10		x5		x5	
	Day 4	Top half squat from pins	Weight:	Top half seated overhead press from pins	Weight:	Front squat w/ bottom pause	Weight:	Overhead Press	Weight:	Dumbbell Lateral raise drop set	Weight:		
1		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5			
2		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5			
3		5x5		5x5		5x5		5x5		x5			
4		3x10		3x10		3x10		3x10		x5			

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EXERCISES:



TOP HALF BENCH PRESS FROM PINS:

This is a valuable exercise for building strength in the lockout portion of the bench press, as well as teaching lifters how to explode through the middle part of the press. It is also great for stimulating the nervous system, because you can do this lift with more than your max.

Starting with a bench in a power rack, set the bar at a height that allows for a 90 degree angle in your elbows. Tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet underneath you and back towards your head, and drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is a slight arch in your lower back. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar up into the locked out top position. The bar should come back to the pins at the bottom of each rep.

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TOP HALF DEADLIFT FROM PINS:



Top half exercises are great tools for two reasons: they develop strength in the lockout portion of the lift (which is often where lifters are weak), and it can be loaded heavier than your max because it is only half of the exercise. Top half exercises are great for activating and overloading the nervous system.

Begin in a power rack with the bar resting on pins set at or just above your knees. Keeping your center of gravity directly under you, grip the bar, drive the hips forward, and bring the bar to lockout.

SNATCH GRIP DEADLIFT:



This is one of the best exercises for adding mass to your back. The grip is more difficult to maintain, and you are working with a greater range of motion than with a

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standard deadlift, which means more total work and time under tension. Because of the hand position, it also puts more stress on your upper back and quads, resulting in more hypertrophy in those areas.

To find the snatch grip, stand with you feet shoulder width apart and grab a bar like you would at the top of a deadlift. Widen your grip until the bar rises to the crease of your hips. This is your snatch grip width.

Stand over the bar as you would for a normal deadlift, bar centered over midfoot. Grip the bar by sitting back and down, your chest will be over the bar and knees behind it. Grip with the snatch width grip you've already established. Begin the pull by driving your knees back and your hips forward. Keeping your spine neutral and the bar close to your shins and thighs, lead your torso upward with your chest, squeeze your lats, and lock out the pull.

BENCH PRESS WITH BOTTOM PAUSE:

Working with a full bottom pause is more difficult because it initiates more time under tension. Be advised, your weight may have to be adjusted down from your normal bench press working weight.

With this press you will allow the bar to come to a full stop at the bottom of the press. Pause for a full 3 seconds and then press out from the bottom position.

All other bench press rules apply. Tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet back underneath you and towards your head, drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is a slight arch in your lower back. Un-rack the bar and bring it down to the bottom of your pecs. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the bar back up into the locked out top position.

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BARBELL ROWS:

Barbell Rows are a great developer of the upper back. A strong upper back is crucial for both overall strength (especially in the deadlift) and structural strength (a weak upper back is often the culprit for bad posture).

Pick the bar up off of the floor while keeping your knees slightly bent and your spine straight, but parallel to the floor. Pull the bar up and into your chest, squeezing your lats at the top.

TOP HALF SQUAT FROM PINS:

Because the top half of a squat is done mainly by the quads, and you can use a lot of weight on a top half movement, the top half squat is a great quad builder.

Perform the top half of a barbell back squat from pins in a power rack or squat rack. Your knees should begin at about a 90 degree angle. The bar should touch the pins at the bottom of each rep.

TOP HALF SEATED OVERHEAD PRESS FROM PINS:

This is a great exercise for building the shoulders and triceps, as well as lockout strength in the overhead press.

Perform the top half of a seated overhead press from pins in a power rack. Your elbows should start at about a 90 degree angle and the bar should touch the pins at the bottom of each rep. Top half movements can be loaded very heavy.

FRONT SQUAT WITH BOTTOM PAUSE:

The Front Squat is a great exercise for building the entire lower body, engaging all of the stabilizer muscles in the core and lower body. Not only is the Front Squat a great

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strength and muscle builder by itself, the leg and core strength you will build with this lift will transfer to all of your other lifts, allowing you to lift more weight and build more muscle. The pause at the bottom keeps you from relying on the elasticity of your muscles to get you out of the bottom of the squat, forcing you to do more work. Be advised, you may have to adjust your working weight downward to accommodate the extra work.

Hold the bar like you would for a overhead press, create a shelf with your chest and shoulders by squeezing your shoulder blades, keep your upper back tall, your elbows

are tucked up and in. Your hands only touch the bar to keep it on this “shelf” and do not bear any of the weight.

Start with your feet at the width that feels natural for you to perform a squat (make sure you are wearing solid, flat soled shoes). Think of your feet as having “four corners” that are glued to the floor. Brace your abs, spread your knees and sit down between your legs. Pause at the bottom of the rep for 3 seconds. Keep your spine tall, straight, and vertical and drive your feet down into the floor until you reach the top.

OVERHEAD PRESS:



The Overhead Press is one of my favorite exercises for building the upper body. This is one of the single greatest lifts for building mass in the shoulders and triceps.

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Starting with the bar in your hands right in front of your chest, squeeze your lats, quads and shoulder blades, brace your abs, and press the bar upward until your elbows are locked out. Keep your heels on the floor throughout the movement.

DUMBBELL LATERAL RAISE

This exercise is a bodybuilding staple for those looking to build wider shoulders. It is excellent at fatiguing the medial head of the deltoid, and has virtually no risk of injury. Take a pair of dumbbells and using only your shoulders, raise them up to your sides until your arms are parallel to the floor. Lower them slowly.

DUMBBELL BENCH PRESS:

The Dumbbell Bench Press is great for building the chest, shoulders, and triceps because you are working with a slightly bigger range of motion than with a barbell press.

Tuck your shoulder blades under to create a stable platform to press from. Bring your feet underneath you and back towards your head, drive them into the floor. Squeeze your quads, glutes, and core so that there is a slight arch in your lower back. Keeping your elbows in towards your body, press the dumbbells up into the locked out top position.

DUMBBELL LUNGES:

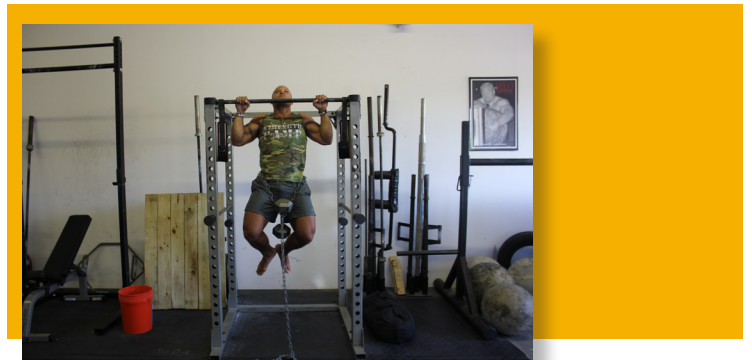
The lunge is one of the best exercises for building the lower body evenly. It will help keep your legs balanced in size, and is a great quad builder.

With dumbbells in your hands, start with you feet together and step forward with one leg so that your back leg is close to fully extended, lower until your front leg is at a 90 degree angle. Using your front leg, push back into the starting position.

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WEIGHTED CHIN-UPS:



Weighted Chins are amazing for building mass and strength in the upper back and biceps. This is an exercise that will never stop challenging you.

You'll need a dip belt to hang a plate from. Begin hanging from the chin-up bar with your palms facing you. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and think of pulling the bar down to meet your sternum. Lower down all the way, but keep your back engaged at the bottom instead of just hanging from your ligaments.

CABLE TRICEPS PUSHDOWN:

This is a great hypertrophy exercise that isolates the triceps, but is much easier on the elbows than skull crushers or other similar exercises.

Using the grip of your choice on a cable column, set the pulley at the top notch. grab the handle and pull your elbows down to your sides. From this position, squeeze your triceps and extend your arms.

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SEATED DECLINE DUMBBELL CURLS:

This is a great exercise for isolating the biceps and working them from a stretched position, all the way to full contraction.

Sit on a bench with the back set at 70-80 degrees incline. Holding the dumbbells, lean back against the bench. Using only your biceps, curl the weight up until your arm is fully flexed.

HOW TO PERFORM THE DROP SETS:

- Select a weight that you can lift for 10 challenging reps
- perform 10 repetitions
- drop the weight by the smallest amount possible
- do as many reps as possible with the new weight
- do not rest between sets
- repeat this process 5 times

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FINAL THOUGHTS

The 5 x 5 system for strength training is one that I hold dear to my heart, as it was the first strength training program I had ever used. After just a few short months of using this system, in its most basic form, I began noticing strength in my lifts and bigger muscles on my body. It is for this reason that I know the 5 x 5 system is foolproof and will work for just about anybody.

It is my hope that in your reading of this book and implementation of the various 5 x 5 programs offered that you will gain the same experience, strength, and muscle that I have. This book not only offers a history of the 5 x 5 method, as well as my experiences using these workouts, but also gives you a glimpse into the evolution of my own personal workouts and how I have molded various low-volume high intensity workouts to continue building my body to be leaner and stronger well into my 30s and beyond.

The process of growing stronger happens on many different levels. This book is shown you exactly how you might develop neuromuscular strength. But it is the **strength of character** that you will gain by working consistently and with focus on your strength and muscle building goals that matters most. Regardless of what training program you choose to follow it is the character developments that always precedes the muscular development which harbors the true jewels of our success.

I believe that there is a stronger version of each and every one of us. It is my mission to uncover it in myself and inspire you to become the strongest version of you. As you travel this journey with me I invite you to record your experiences, reflect on where you have come from, and where you were going. Along this path you will meet

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others that you might inspire to do the same thing. These are your brothers in strength, and it is our responsibility to work together and to Grow Stronger.

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Recommended Training Equipment

The Full Metal Industries Power Rack: You really don't need too much equipment to use the Advanced 5 x 5, but there is one piece that I think you should have. A durable rack where you can perform all of your pressing, squatting and pulling.



I have three **FMI Racks** in my gym. The reason why I love these so much is because they don't take up too much space, they're durable AND have a cool chin up bar that includes a 2" diameter option.

[CLICK HERE If You're Interested In Learning More About The FMI Power Rack.](#)

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Recommended Reading Material

The following books have been referenced throughout The Grow Stronger manual. I purposefully did not fill this manual with too much technical talk in order to keep it simple and allow you to get started right away, without too much thinking.

But if you're a strength geek like me, then you'll want to dig a little deeper into the mechanics of barbell and gymnastics training. You can never have enough books in your library, especially books that help you become a stronger version of yourself.

The following books are highly recommended for additional, in depth, study.

[Deadlift Dynamite](#) by Andy Bolton & Pavel

[Easy Strength](#) by Dan John & Pavel

[Power To The People](#) by Pavel

[Raising The Bar](#) by Al Kavaldo

[Renegade Diet](#) by Jason Ferruggia

[Workout Finishers](#) by Mike Whitfield

[Self Reliance](#) by Ralph Waldo Emerson (Bonus Reading)

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A close-up photograph of a muscular man's back and right arm, showing a tattoo on the shoulder.

Elliott's Websites

HulseStrength.com

Strengthology.net

[Elliott's Facebook Page](#)

[Elliott's YouTube Channel](#)

[Elliott's Twitter](#)

Thank you for investing in this book and taking the time to try my methods for building strength!

Elliott Hulse



Grow Stronger,
Elliott Hulse